

1/30/2012

To Susan Fox in answer  
to your eight questions  
emailed to me this morning.

Sincerely,  
Vern Baer

1. No, I am not really familiar with Montana law restrictions. Since impartiality is required, I assume that I must cut off all ties to political parties, candidates and initiatives. This I can, and will do if appointed.
2. My legal writing experience consists of filing grievances against federal employers to successful conclusions without legal representation, filing per se and processing a complaint against irrigation ditch companies and their insurers to a successful conclusion without legal representation, and filing a per se lawsuit against numerous parties related to a ditch flood.
3. No, I have never been a party to a complaint filed with the COPP.
4. My major past involvement was as a candidate myself for the Public Service Commission in 2000. I participated in every facet of a campaign, including TV and radio interviews, advertising, publicity, writing columns and ad copy, strategy, white papers, media interaction, signage, and events. I was also a candidate for the City and County Charter Review Commissions in 1994, where I also did all facets of the campaign.

For the office of President, in 1972 I was a coordinator for five counties of New Hampshire in the campaign of George McGovern. In 2004 I was on paid staff for the campaign of Senator John Kerry in West Virginia responsible for crowds, signage and logistics for twelve counties. For President Barack Obama in 2008 I manned a telephone bank in Montana as a volunteer.

For both the office of Senator and Governor I participated in many facets and activities of the campaigns of Governor Brian Schweitzer in Montana.

I worked on many aspects of the Kendall Van Dyk campaign for State Senate.

I was the paid campaign manager for Larry Ridle and Jeff Simkovic in their 2002 and 2000 respective races for the Montana State House. I was also a paid campaign manager for two State Senate campaigns in the 1970s and 80s in New York State.

I was a member of the strategies committee/board for Yellowstone County for the Clean Water initiative, I-122, and an active participant in the campaign to obtain enough petition signatures to get the initiative on the ballot.

5. Yes, I have been affiliated with the Democratic Party and ran as a Democrat for the PSC. I was also affiliated with the political action committee for I-122. The knowledge I gained prior to my appointment as COPP will be invaluable to me to help spot infractions, understand nuances and to balance my decision making. But that affiliation must all be in the past for as COPP I must remain impartial on all decisions.

6. The candidate contribution limits are satisfactory for both the legislature and for state-wide races such as Governor and Attorney General. But for the Public Service Commission campaigns they are inadequate because the candidate must run in one-fifth of the state, a much bigger area than the legislative races. For PSC the limits should be increased to nearly the level of other state-wide races.
7. Neither I, nor my family has been involved in the legislative process as a registered lobbyist. On the other hand, I have been a very active citizen who met with my own legislative members in Helena to individually lobby them on advertising issues, historical preservation of Virginia City, and the clean air in the Yellowstone River valley.
8. I am not sure. Lobbyist's behavior would be an area where education on my part and further research would be required. It is quite possibly very important since I am aware that there has been considerable misbehavior at the federal level.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Vern Bass".

Vern Bass